

**Lord Mawson OBE**

**Speech to The Foundation for Science and Technology meeting on the theme “What will be the legacy of the 2012 London Olympics”.**

**9<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 at The Royal Society**

**WATER CITY – THE FUTURE OLYMPIC LEGACY IN EAST LONDON**

“Governments understand the shape of the forest, but have little idea what is actually going on under the trees” *Lord Peyton of Yeovil*

Real Olympic legacy will be found not in Government offices but in the rich and fertile soil under the trees in the East End of London.

The Bromley by Bow Centre, with its partners Poplar HARCA and Leaside Regeneration, have learned a great deal about “doing” legacy over the last 25 years and today are bringing together a £1 billion regeneration programme on an area of land equal in size to the Olympics on the opposite side of the road, but to date there has been no strategic conversation between these two projects.

Water City ([www.watercity.org.uk](http://www.watercity.org.uk)) is a once in a lifetime opportunity for East London, which is in danger of being missed as the real long-term legacy of the Olympic Games. What must now be done to ensure this is not the case?

Lord Mawson described the Olympics as a three-legged stool. One leg is the sport, led by Lord Coe; the second leg is the Olympic kit, i.e. stadium, aquatic centre etc, led by the Olympic Delivery Authority; and the third leg is the wider legacy in the Lower Lea Valley which at present has no leader in Government and the detail of which is still little understood by colleagues in central Government. What now needs to happen to ensure this matter is rectified?

Five point plan

1. Understand first that legacy is about people and place. You have to do both together and not separate them. Legacy is about using the capital development of the Olympic Games to stimulate social and economic development in the Lower Lea Valley.
2. The place that legacy must address is not the Olympic venues alone or the whole Olympic park area. It is the development opportunity from Hackney Marshes to the Thames. This is the big picture.
3. To deliver this legacy we require someone who understands all of this – people, communities and place – and who can draw it together. There is at present no “mind” which has a view over this whole area. We now need a

leader to bring together a new legacy vehicle, which is a social enterprise and not another government structure. This vehicle must build upon the experience of what has already worked in the area. This person needs to understand East London intimately and bring together key leaders in the Lower Lea Valley to drive the Water City vision forward.

4. “Central Government, London Government and Local Government have been dancing round each other for five years. They have now got to act together. There needs to be one board/organisation run as a social enterprise. Instead of each public government organisation having its own agency, there now needs to be one agency.” - Paul Brickell, Senior Adviser on the Olympics to Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham

5. Business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs have a critical role to play in the future legacy in East London. Central Government must stop ignoring them and learn from their many years of practical experience on the ground in the Lower Lea Valley.

A new way of “doing” regeneration is emerging in East London, which is being led by business and social entrepreneurs working in partnership with key leaders in the public sector. Government now needs to create the space which enables these leaders to lead.

What does Water City – a big legacy picture – look like?

<http://www.leasideregeneration.com/movienews.php>

Reference

The Social Entrepreneur: Making Communities Work, Mawson, A, 2008

ISBN 978-1-84354-661-0

Published by Atlantic Books, London

[www.atlantic-books.co.uk](http://www.atlantic-books.co.uk)

Available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)